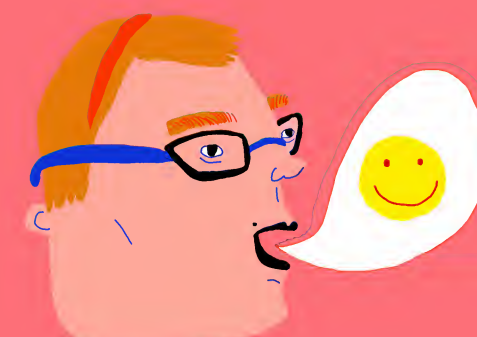


EZRA W.
SMITH'S
ZINE VOL.1





Hello.

I am Ezra, the illustrator.

I find the concept of “physical body” and “immortal soul” quite toxic. All of our feelings and emotions are the result of our brain chemistry. And the brain is a part of our body. We are our bodies, and our bodies should not be seen as something separated from *us*.

As a teenager I had a terrible relationship with my body image, I hated everything about how I look. I felt like My Body is fighting me, by gaining weight, by growing the way I didn’t want it to grow and finally by drawing too much attention to me. I was fat shamed and sexualized starting at age of 11 (at least that is the first time that I remember both of these things). And I thought My Body is to blame for it. Like there was some other real me somewhere inside of it that suffered because of how the body looked.

So for many years I fought back. Fought back against my body instead of fighting people who treated me like shit.

For quite a while now I’ve been trying to see it differently. I found out I can feel better, happier by treating my body nicely, by taking care of it, and seeing it as part of me. Actually, as *all of me*. I am my body and there is no me without my body.

This is why I chose to concentrate on body and all aspects of the physical nature of our existence. Vol.1 is a collection of stories about scars. I feel like for a lot of people scars are a huge part of their identity. I am not one of them, even though I have one big scar and you can read its story on page 5. And also not all stories in this zine are about scars that were a result of traumatic experience. Some people who wrote stories for this zine hate their scars, some love them, some don’t mind them.

If you feel like you might be triggered by reading about self harm consider to skip the story on page 7. If you are triggered by mentions of suicide consider skipping story on page 13. However there is no graphic image of any of these things so you can safely look at all of the drawings.

This zine turned out to be maybe not as inclusive as I hoped. Therefore there is going to be another volume about scars in future. If you have a story to tell, feel free to write me a note via email hitme@ezrawsmith.com or through the contact form on my site www.ezrawsmith.com

Vol.2 of my zine is going to be about tattoos. I already have a couple of stories collected but if you want to share a story about your tattoos with me you can also send it in the above-mentioned ways.

It can be a story about your favorite tattoo and how you got it, about tattoo(s) you regret, about tattoos that have special meaning, or about what the whole process of getting inked means to you.

Looking forward to reading and illustrating your stories!

- Ezra.





My scar is a reminder of the day my body was cut open.
 For the first and possibly(hopefully?) last time.
 It's a reminder of the day when I saw my daughter for the first time.
 That was many years ago but I still don't like when people touch it. The scar is strangely
 sensitive and at the same time I have an area under it, maybe 5x2 cm where I feel
 absolutely nothing.
 I never felt bad about the scar. No one can see it other than people I am very close with.
 I am not exactly a beach person. I am rarely naked in front of others.
 Sometimes I forget I have it. My daughter is fascinated with the story of my scar.
 She continues asking me how she was born, how she looked and how that felt for
 me, even though she heard that story a thousand times already.

- Ezra.

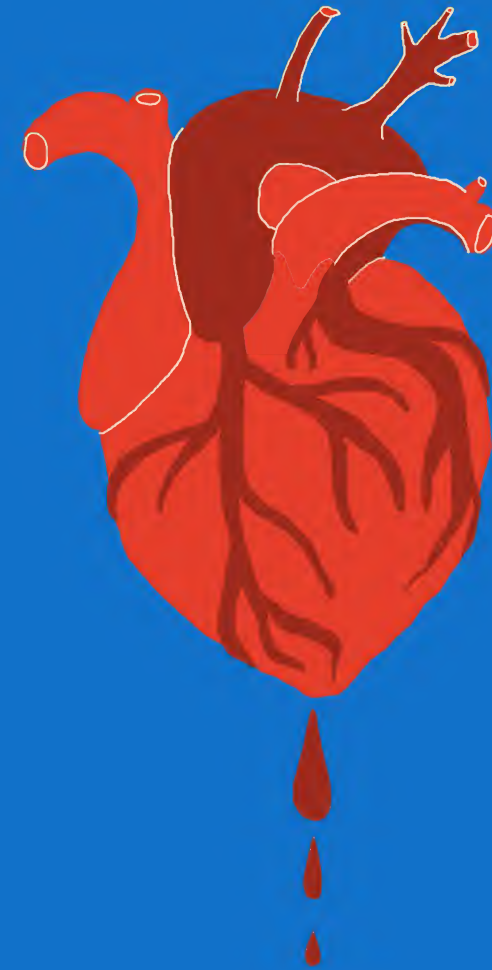




I have a scar on my lip which started as chapped lips, which turned out to be not so easy to cure. Then I thought that it actually looked cool (meaning: I look cool with it and the whole "scars make a man handsome") and I started ripping it to the point of bleeding every evening with tweezers with a sharp edge (and with my nails all the time). Then I decided to stop it because it's self-harm. All in all, I still think it looks interesting, but right now my lips are chapped again and I'm just curing it slowly and steadily.

-Teddy.

📷@theodorebasmanov



I was born with a broken heart, not in a poetic but in a literal sense. My heart didn't work. I was first operated on at the age of 6 days. My body was growing, and my scar was growing with it. I lived (live?) at the complete mercy of my heart. It can stop working and there is nothing I can do about it. My heart decides if I can exercise (I can't), what I can or cannot eat, what drugs I can or cannot take. My broken heart is what shapes my life. I was always ashamed of my scar until I met my partner. I know is bad to form your body image based on how others see you, but that is the truth. I hated my body, I couldn't imagine how someone can love body like mine before I met her. At the moment I don't feel very bad about my scar, but I am still far from acceptance. I never wear clothes that show my scar in public.

- Francesca.



Pimple jungle Pizza face

The thing that hurt me so much as a teen is now a favorite part of my body. Severe physical pain, mental pain and bullying.

Living with severe cystic acne in your teens sucks, so many drugs, so many washes, different types of acid, don't drink that, don't eat that. Being told you need to fix yourself messes you up a bit as a teen. My face is now a map of that trauma. I hated it at first, but it's grown on me. It now feels like a part of me and I love it. I guess I have reclaimed all that pain and flipped it on its head. My scars add interest to my face, my skin will never be smooth and I'm okay with that. I have lines and holes where most don't. My dimples stand out more because of my scars. Doctors still try to push me into getting them reduced by laser. Offer products to help. My skin has been through enough chemicals. I choose to keep my scars as they are. A map of some hard younger years. I love my acne scars. That confuses a lot of people, but I hope by talking about it I can help others feel more comfortable with theirs.

- Annabelle.

@tempestscorner



TRIGGER
WARNING:
SUICIDE



It was the spring of junior year of high school and I was sitting on the roof that I could access from my bedroom window. I liked crawling out there to read. I had felt depressed for a long time by then but the last couple of days I had leaned into it, and I started to feel nothing. I realized that jumping off the roof might make me feel something, like a wave of adrenaline. Instead it felt like my leg and ankle breaking because that's what happened. I was in the hospital for four days, and had surgery to repair my leg. It left me with three scars that I used to resent. Now I think they're kind of sick and remind me of what my body is capable of healing from.

- Victoria.





I was 7 or 8 and I was a guest at my friend's countryside house. My friend had a dog, kind and well trained rescued tosa-inu, the Japanese fighting dog. It was evening, I was sleepy. The dog was sleeping on the kitchen floor. I lay down near him and hugged his neck. When I woke up, I felt pain and I found blood all over my face. I was afraid he ate my face off. But the truth was I scared him in his sleep, he jumped to his feet. And tiny me flew all the way to the wall. And cut open my chin. Despite this, I never had a fear of dogs after that and I stayed good friends with this dog. And, yes, I had several stitches on my chin.

- Mariia Kolker.
@kolkerpics



I had a knife in 6th grade cuz I was scared of a 9th grader who bullied me. Showed it to my friend on the bus home, he asked if it was sharp. To demonstrate that it wasn't sharp I held/slid it against my hand, when nothing happened I did it again, harder and got this cut. Fast forward 12 years and I filled it with White tattoo ink thinking it would look cool, but it just looks even more like a scar.

- Markus.



"Hello! My name is Maria. When I was 14 my mom, my brother Tommy and I got into a car accident. That day Tommy (he was 18 at the time) met his friend Luca for a coffee. When my mom and I picked him up he had black coffee to go with him. I have another scar, from the coffee burn on my other arm, but it's much smaller than the one from the accident. That day I lost my brother and I got those two scars. My arm (the one with the big scar, not the burn) never fully recovered. It doesn't work properly because my muscles don't work. My hands look different; the one that is connected to the healthy arm is bigger and stronger. With time I learned to hide the scar from people and the fact that one of my hands doesn't really work properly. A lot of my friends didn't know about it for years, until I myself brought it up".

-Maria.





P.S. This zine is created by the illustrator Ezra W. Smith. All of the illustrations belong to her and cannot be used for commercial projects without her permission©.

The PDF-version of this zine is essentially free, but if you liked it so much that you want to pay for it, please feel free to support me on Patreon.



Ezra Willow Smith is a female freelance illustrator, now based in Central Europe. Her work mainly deals with issues of sexuality,



women health, feminism, visibility of lesbian and bisexual women and gender equality.

Find out more about Ezra
at www.ezrawsmith.com